

Missouri Mentor Initiative (MMI)

2008 Version - Policies and Procedures Manual

The MMI Policies and Procedures Manual have been developed to accomplish the following:

- Provide the State of Missouri with a “controlled” model for “piloting” purposes;
- Answer questions related to the day to day implementation of MMI;
- Protect the State of Missouri from any unnecessary or unforeseen legal exposure;

The pilot has been extended for another year. The program has been extended to more employees (300) and expanded to accommodate state employees through the community based program.

1. Employee Eligibility: 300 state employees will be allowed to participate in the second year of the pilot (August 2008 – June 2009). All state employees must receive permission from their human resource departments/supervisors in order to participate. All human resource departments/supervisors will be contacted at the point of application. Paid time off can be withdrawn by the State at any time due to personnel concerns.

Justification: To adequately test the pilot, the full system, including volunteer recruitment in multiple locations, processing and training of volunteers, standardizing reporting and evaluation, and many other elements must all be a part of the pilot phase.

2. Eligible Programs: Only Big Brothers Big Sisters programs will be eligible. Although state employees will be able to volunteer in many different counties served by Big Brothers Big Sisters, special attention will be given to the highly populated areas of the state, including St. Louis City, St. Louis, Jackson, Greene, Cole, Boone, Jasper and Newton Counties.

Justification: Big Brothers Big Sisters is the most sophisticated and scientifically researched mentoring program in the state and nation. Because it has well developed operations in the most populated areas of the state, the pilot project can fully test the demands to take such a program statewide. In addition, BBBS has standardized screening and evaluation processes in place, ensuring the greatest likelihood of success in the pilot year. The pilot program does not eliminate the addition of other mentoring/tutoring programs in subsequent years.

3. Volunteer Recruitment: It will be the responsibility of BBBS of Eastern Missouri to work closely with the Office of Lt. Gov. and a MMI committee to build a volunteer recruitment program for state employees. Some ideas include: (1) recruitment rallies at state offices and (2) activities designed to drive potential recruits to the Lt. Gov. webpage to learn more about the program and apply online. All applications will be taken online and electronically forwarded to BBBSEMO for distribution to the appropriate BBBS agency.

County Recruitment Goals:

County	RECOMMENDATION for match targets
Boone	25
Cole	75
Green	40
Jackson	30
Jasper	15
St. Louis	115
TOTAL	300

Justification: The recruitment of volunteers will need to be carefully planned and monitored. It is assumed that more than 300 state employees will be interested, including those continuing in the program, in becoming a mentor/tutor. Specific plans will need to be made to recruit volunteers throughout the state. A specific number of volunteers, based on the county population, will be targeted for recruitment. Volunteers will be screened on a first come first serve basis unless the needs of the children and schools dictate otherwise. It will be critical to track key information about the recruits (i.e. numbers, demographics, and processing yield rates, etc.) to fully understand how to take the program statewide. BBBS agencies will have sole discretion over scheduling volunteer screenings.

4. Eligible Programs – Community Based Program and School Based Program:

Only public school students served by BBBS in the eligible counties can participate in the pilot program. Because of many factors, namely transportation, the opportunity to volunteer has been expanded to include not only the school based program, but the community based program. This means that state employees can take off the same one hour a week to mentor a public school student in the community. The typical situation will be an employee taking off at the end of the work day to mentor in his/her own community.

Justification: It will be important to on-board families and schools to the unique nature of the Missouri Mentor Initiative program. Families and schools will have to support the tracking of volunteers and volunteer hours.

5. Volunteer Screening: All volunteers will be screened, accepted or denied based on the sole discretion of the local BBBS agency.

Justification: Relying on BBBS well defined screening system eliminates the need for the state and state departments to be involved in such issues. It also minimizes the State's burden legally since all documentation and questions will be gathered and protected by BBBS policies and procedures and not co-mingled or confused with employ rights. Matching of volunteers with particular children will also be at the sole discretion of BBBS.

6. Program Evaluation: State employees and participating schools must agree to complete several evaluations per year and provide information aimed at fully assessing the quality of the program and the outcomes for children. The information will be collected by the various BBBS programs, but will be compiled and reported to the Office of the Lt. Gov. by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri.

Justification: To fully understand the pilot, information must be collected consistently and from the greatest number of participants. By placing BBBS of Eastern Missouri as the lead agency, the Office of the Lt. Gov. and the BBBS agencies statewide will have one point of contact which will ensure greater service and consistent messaging.

7. Regular Reporting: BBBS of Eastern Missouri will provide the Office of the Lt. Gov. with at least quarterly reports on the following:

- # of volunteer inquiries and associated demographics
- # of matched volunteers and associated demographics
- Current needs of the project
- Current concerns of the project

In addition to quarterly reporting, BBBSEMO will provide the Office of the Lt. Gov. with the following information at least annually:

- Total number of children served
- Match retention rates
- Quality of mentoring relationships
- 21 measures associated with asset building and youth development (developed by BBBSA and Search Institute)
- Number of children with increased performance in school and their ability to stay out of trouble, as defined by suspensions and expulsions from school.
- Satisfaction information from volunteers and schools

Justification: BBBS is the most scientifically researched mentoring program in the nation and the only program to have an effective mentoring model in place for reliable evaluation on a state-wide basis. The pilot project will benefit greatly from using the BBBS evaluation models.

8. Volunteers Minimum Commitment: Volunteers are expected to spend a minimum of 4 hours a month with the child and for a minimum of nine months. The contact schedule should be weekly or bi-weekly. Of course, volunteers can spend more time with the child. However, all contact is restricted to the school or community based program requirements, unless otherwise authorized by BBBS.

Justification: According to scientific research a volunteer mentor must spend a minimum of 4 hours a month to build the quality relationship necessary to create lasting impact. This research has been recently confirmed by a three year scientific research project on school based mentoring. If volunteers want to volunteer for the community based program and visit a child outside of school it is additional screening (i.e. driver's license, insurance, etc.) be completed and approved by BBBS and the parent.

9. Volunteer Reporting and Tracking: BBBS agencies will work with participating schools and families to track the time spent mentoring by state employees. This information will be provided to the state of Missouri on a regular basis and will serve two purposes (1) tracking time away from work and (2) recognizing and appreciating volunteers.

Justification: It is important to provide the state of Missouri with accurate information as it relates to the pilot and how the state employees are fulfilling their commitment as volunteers. It will also provide supportive information for paid time off. Lastly, we know that the best volunteer retention strategy is recognition and reward. Therefore, we will want, with the support of the Lt. Gov. and Gov. to recognize those state employees who are giving their time to help a child.

10. Mentoring Scheduling: Volunteers are encouraged to visit their mentee weekly. Depending on the school and the child's schedule, volunteer mentors will be able to visit during school hours and/or during after school programming. If participating in the Community Based program, volunteers will see their mentees outside of the regular school hours.

Justification: Frequently young people, especially those at the greatest risk, benefit greatly from one-to-one attention and special help in certain subjects. Volunteers may find it beneficial to join their mentee for lunch and remain at the school for an extended period to help the child with a special project or on a particularly difficult day.

11. Matching: Typically, men will be matched with boys and women will be matched with girls. When there is shortage of male mentors, women may be matched with young boys. In addition, questions regarding race will be used for several reasons – (1) demographics and making sure we are reaching a diverse population in our recruitment efforts and (2) matching volunteers and children.

Justification: Because there are so many boys in need of male role models, men will always be matched with boys. It is also true that many times women volunteer in greater numbers. Special care will be given to matching women with young boys when necessary. All matching will be dependent upon the needs of the young person and the suitability of the volunteer. Whereas there is no goal to match children with a volunteer of the same race, the needs of the children will also be prioritized.

12. Supervision and Support: All volunteers, children and teachers will be given support by BBBS staff. The supervision includes making sure that the volunteer is fulfilling their mentoring obligation and providing advice and guidance to the mentor when problems arise. Children are given special support to make sure they are comfortable and safe in their mentoring relationship. And finally, BBBS staff talks frequently with teachers to develop a working understanding of how the mentoring relationship is developing and any changes he/she might see in the child's attitude and performance.

Justification: Making the match is the first step, keeping it together and growing it in a healthy manner is what makes the difference. It is during this phase that the volunteer will need the greatest amount of attention and support

13. Insurance: BBBS agencies all carry comprehensive insurance, including child sexual abuse insurance and all matches are covered.

Justification: BBBS insurance will give the program and the state of Missouri additional coverage.

14. Coordination with State Departments and Supervisors: Human Resource Departments and Supervisors are a part of the initial volunteer screening processes. All state employees must receive permission to take paid time off to serve as a mentor. At any time this privilege may be withdrawn. HR Departments/Supervisors will be notified when an employee is matched or when a state employee is no longer a part of the program because his/her match closed. Additionally, HR Departments will have access to school attendance records and can verify employee's time away from work.

Justification: In order to ensure that the program works effectively it is imperative that the system build in accountability processes and procedures. From time to time a volunteer may lose his/her privilege of taking paid time off to serve as a mentor, however, this does not prevent the volunteer from continuing to mentor during other times. If a volunteer is ever denied acceptance or continuation in the program, it will be at the sole discretion of the local BBBS agency.